

eighteenth than to the nineteenth and twentieth century varieties. Morality originates in sentiments of approbation, and at the centre of this field of affectionate approval is human well-being. Politics is a matter of compromise made possible by widespread but imperfect agreements in judgement. Medical practice, social policy and education are about promoting and protecting the interests of human kind. Regular readers of the JME will engage most directly with the first 100 pages in which Warnock's liberal, humanist, intuitionistic welfareism is directed towards questions of life, death, experimentation and paternalism; but there is much to enjoy, and to be informed by, in later chapters.

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Christian ethics in health care

John Wilkinson, Edinburgh, Handsel Press, 1988, £27.50

The appearance in 1994 in the JME of a review of a book published in 1988 is not due to dilatoriness on the part of the reviewer but to an editorial decision that it ought to be noticed; rightly so, because it is a substantial achievement, not to be overlooked because it is specifically written for Christian doctors, nurses and other health care professionals. Its author is a graduate of Edinburgh University in both divinity and medicine. He spent 30 years in medical missionary work in Kenya and then, before retirement, was a community medicine specialist for the Lothian Health Authority. The sub-title tells us that this is a source book, and indeed it is more likely to be used for reference than continuous reading. There are three parts. The first two are relatively brief, 'Christian ethics in outline' and 'Health care ethics in history'. The rest of the book, from page 163, deals with a range of issues in health care: those concerned with the beginning and end of life; with experiments on human subjects and the question of consent; with the allocation of health care resources; with relations between health care professionals and with the public, and with AIDS.

Wilkinson remarks that writing a book on these issues is like trying to

hit a moving target; but he was up-to-date in 1988, as the extensive references to American and UK medical literature show, and I do not think things have changed very much since then, so that the book will be useful for several more years. The pros and cons of most issues are given, and not just Wilkinson's own stance. There is a robust realism in his approach to the allocation of resources and to questions of relationships within the health care professions.

In Christian theology and ethics the author is not quite so expert as he is in medicine but, more important, his stance is clearly 'evangelical'. This shows particularly in the bibliography and in the attitude to the Bible. However, there are a number of references to Roman Catholic sources and teaching, and these are clear and up-to-date (including the revised Code of Canon Law of 1983). As to the Bible, Wilkinson is inclined to move too simply from the text to current problems, as from the feeding of the 5,000 to resource allocation, or in the attitude to homosexuality. He is no fundamentalist but he is prone to be literal in his use of texts, as in the case of the Fall. Also he makes the common evangelical assumption that if one's character is right and good so will be one's conduct (page 164). But the concern of the book for accurate information and diagnosis shows that in practice he sees that more than good motives are needed.

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Creation and abortion: a study in moral and legal philosophy

F M Kamm, 227 pages, New York, 1992, Oxford University Press, £25.00 hc, £8.95 pc

The pro-life argument that abortion is immoral says that a human fetus has the same moral standing as a human adult and that abortion, by killing the fetus, violates its right to life. A pro-choice response can either deny that the fetus has moral standing or argue that even if it does have standing, abortion does not violate its rights.

Common though it is, the first response is hard to make decisive. There are strong arguments against the view that moral standing is acquired at conception, but there seem also to be persuasive arguments against other proposed cutoff points, such as the start of brain activity, viability, and birth. Hence the attractiveness for a pro-choice position of the second response: show that even if the fetus does have rights, abortion is not wrong.

This line was first taken in Judith Thomson's 'A defense of abortion' (1). Thomson compared having an unwanted pregnancy to being kidnapped by a Society of Music Lovers and forcibly attached to a famous but ailing violinist. The violinist needs to use one's kidneys for nine months; otherwise he will die. He is innocent and has a right to life. Yet surely, Thomson argued, one is morally permitted to unplug oneself from him. Similarly, a woman is often permitted to abort a fetus.

Striking though it is, Thomson's analogy has several flaws. The violinist may be innocent, but he is the beneficiary of other people's guilty action. In unplugging him, one merely foresees but does not intend his death. Arguably, one also merely allows him to die, rather than killing him.

F M Kamm is aware of these and other difficulties with Thomson's analogy. But she believes that a position like Thomson's can be shown to be reasonable, if not incontrovertibly true. Doing so is the task of her brilliant but difficult book *Creation and Abortion*.

Kamm begins by discussing non-abortion cases of bodily attachment, such as that of the famous violinist. She argues that one is permitted intentionally to kill the violinist – not just unplug him – if that is necessary to avoid something as serious as the invasion of one's bodily integrity. A main reason is that killing the violinist deprives him only of a life that depends on one's support; that is, killing does not harm him relative to his position before attachment.

Kamm then extends this argument to abortion cases, distinguishing pregnancies due to rape, voluntary pregnancies, and pregnancies that were foreseen but not intended. But here she finds a difficulty: the extended argument implies that a woman who has an abortion after getting pregnant as a summer project – just to see what it is like – does nothing wrong. The woman's fetus is